"A TOUCH OF THE OLD CHARM CLINGS TO HER STILL."

In the morning of youth we loved, and we parted
In sorrow—my first love and I;
And now when we meet, unconstrained, and light-hearted,
With a friendly "good-day" we pass by;
Yet I turn and look back despite of my will—
There's a touch of the old charm that clings to her still!

At times we discourse of the old days together
With a smile, or, it may be, a sigh,
And there is never a doubt in our heart as to whether
That love with our youth did not die;
Yet at parting I waver, despite of my will—
There's a touch of the old charm that clings to her still!

There's a witchery 'round her time cannot dispel,
In her movements, a grace her's alone;
And I know not what thoughts from their fountains upswell,
When still in my heart I must own
That, be it for good or be it for ill,
There's a touch of the old charm that clings to her still!

—*Hon. Daniel B. Lucas, West Va.*

Selected Serial.

HOW THEY KEPT THE FAITH.

A Tale of the Huguenots of Languedoc.

BY GRACE RAYMOND.

CHAPTER II.

COUNTING THE COST.

The lights were out in the Huguenot temple; the consistory had dispersed, and old Basil, the sexton, stood waiting to lock the door, as the pastor and a solitary companion came out. The face of the minister was irradiated with saintly joy, but the cheek of the young man was flushed, and his slouched hat was drawn far over his brow. Godfrey Chevalier paused a moment beside the white-haired sexton.

"Congratulate Armand," he said gently. "Like Peter, he denied his Master in an hour of sore temptation, but like the great apostle, he, too, has bitterly repented, and been, he hopes, forgiven. The Church has restored him to membership."

"Is it indeed so?" asked the old man, glancing at the averted face. "Then God be praised, my young brother, and may He give you grace to stand steadfast henceforward."

"Pray for me," mutered Armand, clasping the proffered hand, but not lifting his head.

"We have need to pray for each other, if the edicts are to grow much stricter," was the answer. "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."

The minister uncovered his head, and lifted a calm, fearless glance to the encircling hills.

"The Lord sitteth King forever," he repeated triumphantly. "Courage, Basil, 'His strength is made perfect in weakness.' Be of good comfort, my poor Armand; 'To whom much is forgiven, the same loveth much.' 'Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation.'"

He replaced his hat, and with a slight gesture of farewell, turned away. The two men stood listening to his footsteps until they died away down the mountain road. Then Basil turned to lock the door, sighing.

"It is not the withered trunk the bolt first smites: it is not for myself I most fear, M. le Pasteur." He glanced up for sympathy to the penitent, but Armand had gone.

There was a light in the window of the pastor's cottage, as he opened the ivy-covered gate, and a woman's dark-robed figure stood waiting in the shadow of the porch. Monique Chevalier's cheek had lost something of its bloom, and her brow been touched by care, since the summer day so long ago, when she had given a nameless stranger shelter in her porch, but there was still the tender light in the dark eyes, and the steadfast sweetness about the grave lips, which had made poor Madame Lertrand's broken heart instinctively flow out to her in trust, and had made Godfrey Chevalier, from the hour when he had first seen her, know her to be more to him than the light of his eyes—more than aught but the love of Christ and the hope of heaven. She had been a wealthy gentleman's daughter, and he only a young licentiate, then; but there had been no faltering in the hand she placed in his, and no hesitation in the feet which had quitted for him the green and pleasant paths to climb the rough and stony slopes of a Huguenot pastor's lot. He loved her with a deep, silent passion, which had become inwrought with every fibre of his nature, but there was little outward token in the grave kiss he set upon her brow.

"You are later than usual to-night; I could not help feeling anxious," she faltered, as they went in together to the cosy, sitting-room, where a child was asleep on the cushions of the settle.

"Poor little maid. I promised her a story, but the vigil has been too long," said the father tenderly, as he touched the golden curls of the little sleeper; and then told the story of Armand, as he hung up his hat and cloak. His wife was setting out a slight refection for him upon the table. He noticed that her hand trembled, and that she did not answer. No musician could be more sensitive to a discord than the grave, scholarly man to any change in the voice or face he loved best.

"What is it, Monique?" he asked, glancing up quickly.

She turned pale, and leaned against the table.

"There has been another edict, Godfrey. Our pastors are forbidden to restore backsliders under heavy penalties."

"How have you heard?"

"Henri La Roche has just returned from Paris. He stopped to leave a packet of letters for you, and finding his father here, tarried awhile. They would have waited until you came, but it grew so late."

"Has our young sieur succeeded in obtaining his commission?"

"He has good hopes of receiving it at last. His uncle Renau has the matter in hand, and will send him word next week."

There was a slight pause while he broke the seal of the packet she handed him.

"His majesty is slow in rewarding the services of so loyal a subject, but monsieur is not of the king's religion. What are the penalties attached to the new edict, Monique?"

She gave a fearful glance over her shoulder, and drew a step nearer to his chair.

"Hard labor at the galleys—for life," she whispered.

Godfrey Chevalier started. He had not expected this. Instead of answering her, he rose and walked to the window, and stood for several minutes looking out on the moonlit hills. Then he came back slowly to the table.

"The King of kings has commanded, 'Restore such an one in the spirit of meekness.' Whom should we obey, Monique?"

She could not answer. Her lip trembled.

"Would you have had me act otherwise to-night, if I had known?"

A moment more of hesitation, and then her dark, tear-filled eyes met his.

"It was your duty to take him back, Godfrey. I cannot wish you had acted differently."

He stretched his hand to her across the table. "Thank you," he said quietly; but the look and the firm, close clasp enriched her more than many words. "We will hope the edict will not be rigidly enforced. Were there aught else, Monique?"

"The singing of psalms has been forbidden in workshops and private dwellings—anywhere beyond the limits of the temple. Oh, Godfrey I heard you chanting a verse as you came up the hill."

"I will do it again, Monique. We will make melody in our hearts hereafter. Is that all?"

"The prohibitions against emigration are renewed, and the penalties increased. Our schoolmasters are forbidden to teach anything but reading, writing, and arithmetic, and our burials must take place after nightfall, or before daybreak. Our young sieur is on fire with indignation."

"Nevertheless we must submit ourselves blameless to every ordinance that does not contravene a higher law. The Lord's cause does not languish, Monique. Here is a letter from Charenton. M. Claude has at last yielded to the entreaties of his friends, and is to have a conference with the Bishop of Condome. Eloquent as he is, M. Bossuet will find he has no mean antagonist in the champion of the wilderness church. There will be bold words spoken for the truth. God grant the faith of more than one wavering heart may be established."

"And that our noble kinsman himself suffer no loss for his championship," added the pastor's wife.

She rose as she spoke in answer to a sleepy murmur from the settle. Little Agnes was awake—a grave, fragile-looking child, with eyes in which lay mirrored the fear that had rested on her mother's heart; and delicate features which looked almost ethereal under the nimbus of golden hair. Monique Chevalier lifted her from the cushions, and led her to her father for his good-night kiss. The pastor gave it tenderly, and looked after them with a moistened glance as they left the room. She was such a gentle flower—this, his youngest and darling—living only in the smiles of those she loved, and trembling at any rude word or look. How would she breast the storm, whose muttered thunders were already shaking strong men's souls? Could that sunny head be always kept safely sheltered? Would that tender hand be able to maintain its hold where the grasp of stronger ones was being wrenched away? "Thou art able to keep that which I have committed unto Thee," he whispered, glancing upward, and then he broke the seal of the other letter that lay before him. His brow grew stern, as he gathered its purport. For several minutes he sat deeply pondering, then taking a sudden resolution he rose and went out into the passage. A faint light gleamed from under a door at the farther end. A murmur of children's voices came down the corridor.

"It is well. They are still up and together," he murmured; and noiselessly approaching the door, lifted the latch.

The apartment was the cosy, well-appointed kitchen, in which Nannette had told her story in the earlier part of evening. The old nurse was gone; the fire had sunk to a few glowing embers, Eglantine sat on a low cricket, drawn well forward on the blue and white tiles, her cheek resting in her hand, her gaze fixed thoughtfully upon the coals. Beside her, leaning against the massive oaken beam that supported the mantle-shelf, was a boy some four years her senior. His figure was in shadow, while hers, by some sweet law of attraction, seemed to gather to itself all the radiance that yet lingered in the room. A large volume, from which they had evidently been reading before the firelight failed, lay on the floor between the two. The little girl was speaking as the pastor entered.

"I would not kneel to the Virgin, nor make the sign of the cross, if the priests should break every bone in my body," she protested warmly, evidently in answer to some appeal from the lad, whose dark, piercing eyes were fixed upon her through the gloom.

"You should not speak so positively," he answered. "No one knows what he would do until he is tried."

"But I do know, Rene. When uncle Godfrey let the blood from my arm last month, did not I hold still without a whimper; and did not Antoine say I bore the pain like a martyr?"

"Then you had my mother to sit by and hold your hand, and my father to kiss you and call you a brave little maid when it was over. That was nothing, Eglantine."

"Then why did you turn white at sight of the blood, and let Nannette fetch you a glass of water, like a girl? I was cool enough to mark that, Master Rene."

"You know very well that was because I could not bear to see you hurt." A sudden leap of the dying flames showed a swift leap of scarlet into the olive cheek. "It was hardly fair to taunt me with that, Eglantine."

Godfrey Chevalier, who had been listening unnoticed, laid his hand upon his son's shoulder. The boy looked up with a quick smile, which spoke volumes for the friendship between them, and Eglantine, with a cry of delight, started from her cricket and threw her arms about her uncle's neck.

"Softly, thou small whirlwind," he cried, laughing, but he drew her tenderly to him as he spoke, and taking a seat on the settle, beckoned Rene to a place beside them.

"I have had a letter to-night which concerns both you and Eglantine," he said. "Hold up your head, little maid, and tell me how old you are?"

"Twelve this mid-summer, uncle Godfrey."

"Full young to be sent out to meet the world, the flesh, and the devil, but your grandfather will have it so. What were you speaking of, my son, when I came in?"

"We had been speaking first, my father, of the new edict, which M. Henri brought us word of to-night, and then I had read to Eglantine the story of sweet Philippa Lunz, and we were supposing that those old days were to come back again, and we should have to hold the faith as hardly as our forefathers did. And Eglantine was sure she would be as steadfast as the noble martyr herself."

"And you were trying to convince her that it would be no easy task? Right, Rene, if you looked at it from the standpoint of our frail human hearts, but only half right, unless you pointed her, too, to the strength that is made perfect in weakness. Light the candle, my son. I will give you a watchword to-night, little maid, that you shall keep in your heart all the years that are to come." He drew a small volume with silver clasps from his breast, and by the light of the candle which Rene brought, Eglantine read the words pointed out: "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help. My help cometh from the Lord which made heaven and earth."

"Not from yourself, little one; your own heart and your own hand will fail thee in the day of trial; your best resolutions wither like withes in the furnace of temptation. Put your trust in Him who 'knoweth neither variableness nor shadow of turning'; He alone is able to keep you from falling. He alone is able, with every temptation, to make a way of escape."

"Is my grandfather going to take me away?" asked the child, recalling the words he had spoken when he first came in.

"M. Laval stopped at La Rochelle on his way to Paris, and met an aunt of your mother's, his wife's elder sister. Madame Cartel would have her young kinswoman come to her for a year or two, little one, that you may have proper masters for music and the languages, and be cured of what your grandfather is pleased to call rustic voice and manners."

"But you will not make me go?—you will not send me away from you?" cried Eglantine, starting from her covert in his arms to look anxiously into his face.

He drew her gently back. "I will help you to do what is right and best. Madame Cartel is a member of the Reformed Church, and promises not to neglect that education which I hold most important. But she says, what is very true, that you cannot in these wild hills obtain the advantages which become your mother's daughter, and it is also true what your grandfather adds, that you should see something of the world before deciding irrevocably upon the home Rene has to offer you."

Eglantine glanced up with tearful eyes at the quiet figure beside her.

"I will never love anybody better than Rene, if I see the whole world," she said, warmly. Her uncle smiled, and a strange, soft light transfigured his son's face.

"I would have to leave you soon, Eglantine, to go to Montauban," said the boy, gently.

"If you love each other, a few years' separation will make little difference," added Godfrey Chevalier. "The shadows thicken about our Reformed Church, and I know not how long my home may be a safe shelter for those I love. It will be a comfort to me, little one, to think of you as protected by powerful friends, until Rene has a home of his own to offer you. You speak of Montauban, my son. You have yet to hear what M. Laval says to you. Take the letter and read. You must decide for yourself."

The boy took the packet quietly, and going to the table, sat down and began to read. The pastor and his little foster daughter watched with different emotions the face now clearly illuminated by the candle. Plain, dark, strongly marked, it was already shadowed with thought beyond his years. Monique Chevalier's son had inherited the strength if not the beauty, of his mother's face, and the grave, firm lips bespoke a nature that, like hers, would be patient to wait, as well as bold to keep. He returned the letter to his father with a grave smile.

"M. Laval would have me abandon the study of medicine to go into his counting-house. What will you say to him, my father?"

"I shall say nothing to him Rene. The offer is to you, and you must make the choice."

The boy had risen and come back to the hearth, and now stood thoughtfully gazing down into the coals at his feet. He was tall for his age, and his sunburnt cheek and well-developed chest and limbs told of much exercise in the open air.

"I have heard you say, my father, that you held the profession of medicine next in usefulness to that of the sacred ministry."

"I hold so still, Rene, next in usefulness and next in danger. You see M. Laval tells us what our young sieur forgot to mention, that the last edict closes the door of your chosen profession to all adherents of the religion."

Godfrey Chevalier's son looked up with a deep, steady fire in his eyes.

"There are Huguenot physicians, however, already in the field, who will gladly open to those who knock. I cannot draw back, my father. If I may not follow your calling, I will at least follow in your steps. I would be unworthy to be called your son if I faltered now. The greater the peril, the fewer there will be who will run the risk, and the fewer, the more need." He stopped suddenly at a low sob from Eglantine. The prospect of her separation from those she loved best had been growing on her childish heart until the small cup had overflowed.

"I want my aunt Monique. Let me go to my aunt Monique!" she exclaimed in a passion of grief, and breaking from the pastor's arms, fled precipitately from the room.

"Let be. The mother will know how to comfort her," said Godfrey Chevalier. "My son, did you mark no double meaning in what M. Laval said of the dowry he would bestow upon his grandaughter, and the interest he would give you in the business if you would show yourself agreeable to his wishes?"

"It is plain that he likes not the prospect of a hard and perilous life for Eglantine," answered Rene. "I infer we would have little to hope from him in the way of worldly advantage, if I displease him now. But you know I havenever looked to the money, father."

"That were little, if that were all, though a share of this world's goods would help thee over many a rough place in these troublous times. Look again, Rene. Remember that M. Laval loves his granddaughter better than aught else in the world; that he holds the secret of her parentage; and that his attachment to our church is only nominal. Remember, that though he has never ventured to claim her openly, it is in his power to do so at any moment, and that you may find it difficult some day to press thy suit with the man you have angered and crossed. M. Laval will not lightly break the promise made to the dead, but he warns you plainly to be careful how you decide."

"You surely do not think he would dare to betray the secret of her birth to the Catholic relatives?"

"Read the letter again."

There was no sound but the crackling of the embers upon the hearth, as the lad, who had all at once grown very pale, obeyed. He did not look up when he had finished, as he had done the first time, and his father laid his hand upon his shoulder.

"'Which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to build it, lest haply, after he hath laid the foundations, he is not able to finish.' Rene, I pray God to give you the desire of your heart, but it is well to ask yourself in the beginning, is there aught dearer to you in the world than Christ, your Lord?"

The youth struggled with himself for a moment more, but it was evidently only to control his emotion. Then he looked up, his face still pale, but his eyes glowing.

"I cannot draw back, but I cannot give her up," he cried. "You have taught me all my life to look upon her as a trust to us from God. What He has given into my care, He will surely give me strength to keep. I might hesitate to ask her to share so hard a lot, if I did not feel that she would be safer with me than with any one else, just because I love and understand her, and will watch over her, as no one else ever would. Let M. Laval do his worst, my father; I will trust God for the future, and go forward and do my duty."

"You are resolved upon that, Rene?"

"At any cost. 'Whoso loveth houses and lands more than Him, is not worthy of Him.'"

"Then I have not been disappointed in you, my son"; and the Huguenot folded his boy in a close embrace. "Be of good cheer, Rene. It is written: 'Delight thyself also in the Lord, and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart.'"

Late that night, as the pastor sat writing at his study-table, he became suddenly conscious of two burning eyes watching him through the pane over which he had forgotten to draw the curtain. He rose at once, and went to the window. The moon was already on the wane, but there was still sufficient light to make objects discernible. There was no one without. After watching several minutes, he was about to turn away, thinking he had been the victim of some strange hallucination, when a stealthy shadow creeping out from under the garden wall, flitted across the road, and disappeared in the opposite wood.

The slouched hat, and short, ragged cloak were those of Armand, the penitent.

(*To be continued.*)

Facts Are the Fingers of God.

And where are the facts of history and of the present pointing, to give special direction to Christian activity? Heretofore Christians have thought of little outside the limits of their immediate locality. The whole outside world has been to them a blank, or at least of so little interest as only to take from their purse the coppers. But see! By the blazing light of heaven God is moving on the Dark Continent, and He is carrying with Him the wealth, the intelligence, and the ambition of even the wicked. What means the clamor of nations for portions of Africa? It is God making every nation of Europe point Christians to that dark continent. What means this Congo Free State on which one man has spent ten millions of dollars, and on which others are pouring in their treasures without stint? These are the fingers of God pointing us to our duty. What means this scramble for trading-posts, and gathering of treasures by these hundreds and thousands of ambitious men from all nations, to all portions of this vast continent? They are the fingers of God bidding Christians to go in and take possession. What mean these ten sugar mills on the St. Paul's River alone, and scores of others erecting in other parts, and these 600,000 pounds a year of coffee coming into the single port of Monrovia; and these caravans, miles in length, each man with fifty pounds of ivory, furs, beeswax, gums, spices, nuts, dye stuffs, minerals, medicines, and precious stones? They are the fingers of God pointing Christians to their work in gathering treasures for their home in heaven. Who are these Moffats, and Spekes, and Camerons, and Livingstones, and Stanleys, and a host of other daring men, struggling through the jungles to bring to light what has been hidden for ages? They are the fingers of God bidding us traverse the dark regions, "hold forth the Word of light." Hark! I hear a wail!—a moan of distress! It is Ethio, is stretching forth her hands for help. Christians, see them pointing to us from every part of that long-neglected country. These poor people are crying loudly, Come over and help us! Ah, these, too, are the fingers of God pointing us to our work.—*Christian at Work.*

Taking the Children.

A little boy had been deeply interested in reading Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress," the characters in that wonderful book being all living men and women to him. One day, while his grandma was busy with her needlework, he took his slate and pencil and seated himself by her side; and, thinking of what he had been reading, he said:

"Grandma, which of all the people in the 'Pilgrim's Progress' do you like the best?"

"I like Christian," was the reply, giving the little boy her reasons. "Which do you like the best?"

Slowly but thoughtfully the little fellow replied, "I like Christiana."

"And why, my boy?" inquired the old lady.

"Because she took the children with her, gandma!"—*The Freeman.*

— A well-known clergyman was busily searching in the Minister Library, at York, the other day, when two young officers of the garrison lounged in. "Well, old man, what have you got to show us?" "Sir," replied the clergyman, "to gentlemen we show the library; to others the door.

— "You can't add different things together," said a teacher. "If you add a sheep and a cow together it does not make two sheep or two cows." A little boy, who was the son of a milkman, held up his hand and said, "That may do with sheep and cows, but if you add a quart of milk and a quart of water it makes two quarts of milk. I've seen it done."

— "Will you be mine, darling?" he asked, after a year's courting. "No, it can never be," was her reply. "Then why have you let me hope so long?" he said, as he went toward the door. "Because I intend never to belong to any man. You can be mine if you like." He saw the difference and stopped. Years afterwards he saw the difference still more clearly.

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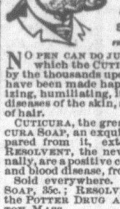

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